

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AID-05 ISO-00 IGA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 /042 W
-----001070 260703Z /13/12
R 252045Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2885
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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AID/W FOR GEORGE PHILLIPS (MRSD/L)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EAID, AIFLD, ICFTU

REF: STATE 243004 (AIDAC)

1. EMBASSY APPROVES IN PRINCIPLE OF PROPOSED AID GRANT TO AIFLD TO BE USED IN SUPPORT OF ORIT EDUCATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES, BUT WE DO NOT TAKE LIGHTLY THE RISK OF AROUSING NATIONALIST SENSIBILITIES AMONG LATIN AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISTS, WHICH COULD PROVE SELF-DEFEATING IN TERMS OF THE OBJECTIVE OF MAKING ORIT A VIABLE INTER-AMERICAN ENTITY. THE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES COMPONENT OF THE PACKAGE POSES THE GREATER ELEMENT OF RISK IN THIS REGARD.

2. NOT THAT THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF THE ARGENTINE UNION MOVEMENT ARE IN ANY MOOD TO LAUNCH SUCH AN ATTACK ON A U.S.-AIDED ORIT AT THIS JUNCTURE. TO THE CONTRARY, SINCE THE ARGENTINE LABOR LEADERS ARE SEEKING HELP FROM ABROAD IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF GOVERNMENT REPRESSION, THEY WOULD WELCOME THIS INITIATIVE. IN
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FACT, THEY ARE MORE APT TO COMPLAIN THAT THE PROJECT DESIGN IS INSUFFICIENT FOR SERVICING THEIR NEEDS, WHAT WITH AN ACTIVIST ASSIGNED FROM BOGOTA TO COVER 9 COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AMERICA WITH A TRAVEL BUDGET OF ONLY \$3,000 PER YEAR.

3. HOWEVER, IN REVIEWING THE PROPOSAL FROM A HEMISPHERIC POINT OF VIEW, IT SEEMS TO US THAT IN DESCRIBING THE ROLE TO BE

PLAYED BY THE FIELD REPRESENTATIVES, THE SYNOPSES PLACE UNDULY GREAT EMPHASIS ON ACTIVITIES COUCHED IN DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE (ENLARGING UNION MEMBERSHIPS, STRENGTHENING BARGAINING POSITIONS, ASSISTING LABOR CODE FORMULATION, ETC.), WHEREAS WE WOULD POLITICALLY-RELATED ORGANIZATIONAL PURSUITS AS HELPING FRIENDS TO WIN UNION ELECTIONS AND GETTING NATIONAL UNION CENTERS TO AFFILIATE WITH "OUR" INTERNATIONALS AS OPPOSED TO RIVAL ORGANIZATIONS. (INCIDENTALLY, IF AIFLD/ORIT CAN GET QUALIFIED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND LABOR CODE EXPERTISE TO SERVE IN THE MORE ADVANCED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES AT \$6,000 ANNUAL SALARY, THEY ARE DOING VERY WELL INDEED).

4. WE WOULD ENDORSE AND EVEN STRENGTHEN THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH V (1) (D) ON PAGE 8 OF THE AIFLD PAPER -- "AT THE END OF THIS SUBCONTRACT ORIT SHALL...PROVIDE GUIDANCE... IN POLITICAL MATTERS THAT MAY AFFECT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A NATIONAL CENTER AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RESPECTIVE COUNTRY." IN FACT, AT A TIME WHEN MILITARY GOVERNMENTS PREDOMINATE IN A MAJORITY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS OBJECTIVE PRESENTS A CENTRAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS PROPOSAL. OF COURSE, STRESSING THIS OBJECTIVE POSES A POTENTIAL CHALLENGE FROM THE MILITARY GOVERNMENTS. THEY MAY OBJECT, BUT WE BELIEVE THIS IS AN ACCEPTABLE RISK WHICH CAN BE KEPT TO MANAGEABLE LEVELS. AND BY CLOAKING THE PROJECT IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FLAG, WE BELIEVE THAT AIFLD HAS THE BEST CHANCE OF MINIMIZING A NATIONALIST COUNTERREACTION FROM TRADE UNION ELEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT NATIONALIST SUSCEPTIBILITIES WOULD BE LESS VIRULENT IF THE U.S. AND AFL-CIO/AIFLD DID NOT APPEAR TO DOMINATE ORIT.

5. THIS LEADS TO A MORE BASIC POINT. WE WOULD BE MORE AT EASE WITH THIS PROPOSAL IF WE HAD A CLEARER IDEA OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN THE NEW ORIT. PRESUMABLY, AIFLD WOULD HAVE A MAJOR ROLE IN THE SELECTION OF THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND THE FIELD REPRESENTATIVES, BUT TO WHOM WILL THEY BE RESPONSIBLE? WHOSE MEN WILL THEY BE--DELPINO'S OR AIFLD'S? WE HAVE NO HARD AND FAST PRESCRIPTIONS TO OFFER ON THIS POINT OTHER THAN THE GENERALIZED OBSERVATION THAT AFL-CIO SHOULD HAVE ITS RIGHTFUL SAY IN ORIT POLICIES AND SHOULD BE ABLE TO USE ORIT TO PROMOTE U.S. LABOR OBJECTIVES WITHOUT DOMINATING THE ORGANIZATION TO THE POINT OF STIFLING IT INTO A YANKEE PUPPET. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT AFL-CIO AND AIFLD'S VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT.

6. TO FURTHER LESSEN THE RISK OF A NATIONALIST BACKLASH, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS:

(A) AN EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO DILUTE THE U.S. FINANCIAL ROLE
BY SEEKING MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE VENEZUELAN AND
OTHER DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS.

(B) THE AID GRANT TO AIFLD SHOULD BE ON A ONE-YEAR BASIS,
RENEWABLE IF JUSTIFIED BY AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST YEAR'S RESULTS.

(C) THE AIFLD CONTRIBUTION TO ORIT SHOULD TAKE ON THE PUBLIC
APPEARANCE OF A NO-STRINGS ATTACHED GRANT TO THE ORIT SECRETARIAT--
EVEN IF PRUDENCE REQUIRES THAT THERE BE MORE ELEMENTS OF CONTROL
EXERCISED FROM BEHIND THE SCENES.

7. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING THE NAMES, NATIONALITIES
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AND UNION QUALIFICATIONS OF THOSE WHO MAY BE IN LINE TO TAKE ON
THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND FIELD REPRESENTATIVE JOBS.

8. FOR AID/W. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR RECOPYING FOR US PAGE 81
OF THE ALEXANDER-HAMMOND REPORT, WHICH IS MISSING FROM OUR SET.

9. FOR MEXICO: DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE RECEIVED YOUR TELEGRAM
5795 COVERING ORIT CONGRESS. WOULD APPRECIATE ANOTHER COPY.
CHAPLIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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